

The THOREAU SOCIETY BULLETIN

BULLETIN THIRTY-FIVE

APRIL 1951

ANNOUNCING THE ANNUAL MEETING . . .

The 1951 annual meeting will be held on--and notice the date, for it is a week early--Saturday, July 7 at 10 a.m. in the First Parish Church vestry in Concord, Massachusetts. The theme of the meeting will be "Illustrating Thoreau." The presidential address will be on Fred Hosmer, who was one of the earliest photographers of the Thoreau country and whose library has recently been given to the Concord Free Public Library (See Bulletin 30). Henry B. Kane will tell of his experiences illustrating the new Norton edition of Thoreau. His talk will be accompanied by Kodachrome slides and illustrations. Anton Kamp will give some reminiscences of N.C. Wyeth and will read an unpublished essay on Thoreau by Wyeth. There will also be an exhibition of illustrations of Thoreau.

At noon, a "dutch treat" picnic luncheon will be served by the Concord committee, with Mrs. Caleb Wheeler in charge.

In the afternoon an excursion is planned to the Fruitlands Museum, operated by Miss Clara Endicott Sears in nearby Harvard, Massachusetts. Mr. William H. Harrison, the director, has promised a special exhibition of their Thoreauviana. Fruitlands is, of course, the site of the experimental community conducted by Thoreau's friends Bronson Alcott and Charles Lane.

THE ANNUAL ELECTION . . .

Our president, Raymond Adams, has appointed Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Oliver (address: Bristol, N.H.) co-chairmen of this year's election committee. Officers to be elected and the current incumbents are president, Raymond Adams, Chapel Hill, N.C.; vice-president, Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass., and secretary-treasurer, Walter Harding, Princeton, N.J.--the preceding offices are for terms of one year--and members of the executive committee for terms of three years, Mr. Francis H. Allen, Cambridge, Mass., and Mr. Roland Robbins, Lincoln, Mass. Additional nominations should be sent to Mr. and Mrs. Oliver prior to May 31, 1951. Ballots will be mailed in mid-June and must be returned to the Olivers by July 1, 1951.

Ethel Seybold's THOREAU: THE QUEST AND THE CLASSICS (New Haven: Yale, 1951). A Review . . .

This is ostensibly a study of Thoreau's interest in the classics. Miss Seybold has read all of Thoreau's writings and studied from a chronological viewpoint his discussion, quotation, and reference to the Greek and Latin authors. The real meat of her work is embodied in three appendices: an annotated list of the classical books used by Thoreau; a checklist by author of the classical quotations used by Thoreau; and an alphabetical checklist of classical quotations and allusions.

Upon this foundation she has constructed a discussion of Thoreau's interest in classicism. She starts off nobly when she announces that, "He was a classicist, just as he was a naturalist or a hermit or a writer, only because and as far as his classicism furthered his search for reality. It was only as the classics were related to the quest that they had meaning and value for Thoreau." (p. 21). As simple an idea as that is, it is an important one and one that most have failed to see.

But unfortunately she is soon astride her hobby horse and making claims for the influence of the classics upon Thoreau that I for one find far-fetched. She would have us believe that "at Walden it was Homer who offered him a working pattern

(Continued on Page Four)

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL AND THOREAU'S FIRST BOOK . . .

It is our intention to eventually include in our society's publications every known reference to Thoreau in print which appeared before his death in 1862. We have not been particularly systematic in carrying out this intention, but a glance through the files of bulletins and booklets will reveal a fairly sizable number of such reprints. In this number of the bulletin we include one of the most important--James Russell Lowell's review of *A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS* which appeared in the *MASSACHUSETTS QUARTERLY REVIEW*, III (December, 1849), 40-51. It is particularly interesting because it gives us an opportunity to examine Lowell's opinion of Thoreau before their unfortunate quarrel of the late 1850's. It is unfortunate that Lowell's infamous review of Thoreau's *LETTERS TO VARIOUS PERSONS* has been permitted to overshadow this earlier work.

ART. II.—*A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*.
By HENRY D. THOREAU. Boston and Cambridge: James
Mourie & Company. 1849. pp. 413.

We stick to the sea-serpent. Not that he is found in Concord or Merrimack, but like the old Scandinavian snake, he binds together for us the two hemispheres of Past and Present, of Belief and Science. He is the link which knits us seaboard Yankees with our Norse progenitors, interpreting between the age of the dragon and that of the railroad-train. We have made ducks and drakes of that large estate of wonder and delight bequeathed to us by ancestral irkings, and this alone remains to us unthrift heirs of Linnæ. We give up the Kraken, more reluctantly the mermaid, for we once saw one, no *mulier formosa, superna*, no green-haired maid with looking-glass and comb, but an adroit compound of monkey and codfish, sufficiently attractive for purposes of exhibition till the suture where the *desinit in pacem* began, grew too obtrusively visible.

We feel an undefined respect for a man who has seen the sea-serpent. He is to his brother-fishers what the poet is to his fellow-men. Where they have seen nothing better than a school of horse-mackerel, or the idle coils of ocean around Halfway Rock, he has caught authentic glimpses of the withdrawing mantlehem of the Edda-age. We care not for the monster himself. It is not the thing, but the belief in the thing, that is dear to us. May it be long before Professor Owen is comforted with the sight of his unflashed vertebrae, long before they stretch many a rood behind Kimball's or Barnum's glass, reflected in the shallow orbs of Mr. and Mrs. Public, which stare but see not! When we read that Captain Spalding of the pink-stern *Three Pollies* has beheld him rushing through the brine like an infinite series of bewitched mackerel-casks, we feel that the mystery of old Ocean, at least, has not yet been sounded, that Faith and Awe survive there unevaporate. We once ventured the horse-mackerel theory to an old fisherman, browner than a tomcod. "Hosmackeril!" he exclaimed indignantly, "hosmackeril be—" (here he used a phrase commonly indicated in laical literature by the same sign which serves for Doctorate in Divinity), "don't yer spouse I know a hosmackeril?" The intonation of that "I" would have silenced professor Monkbairns Owen with his provoking phrase forever. What if one should ask him if he knew a trilobite!

The fault of modern travellers is that they see nothing out of sight. They talk of eocene periods and tertiary formations, and tell us how the world looked to the plesiosaur. They take science (or nescience) with them, instead of that soul of generous trust their elders had. All their senses are skeptics and doubters, materialists reporting things for other skeptics to doubt still further upon. Nature becomes a reluctant witness upon the stand, badgered with geologist hammers and phials of acid. There have been no travellers since those included in Hakluyt and Purchas, except Martin, perhaps, who saw an inch or two into the invisible at the Orkneys. We have peripatetic lecturers, but no more travellers. Travellers' stories are no longer proverbial. We have picked nearly every apple (wormy or otherwise,) from the world's tree of Knowledge, and that without an Eve to tempt us. Two or three have hitherto hung luckily beyond reach on a lofty bough shadowing the interior of Africa, but there is a Doctor Bialloblotzky at this very moment pelting at them with sticks and stones. It may be only next week, and these, too, bitten by geographers and geologists, will be thrown away. We wish no harm to this worthy Slavonian, but his name is irresistibly suggestive of boiled lobster, and some of the natives are not so choicé in their animal food.

Analysis is carried into everything. Even Deity is subjected to chemic tests. We must have exact knowledge, a cabinet stuck full of facts pressed, dried, or preserved in spirits, instead of a large, vague world our fathers had. Our modern Eden is a *hortus siccus*. Tourists defraud rather than enrich us. They have not that sense of æsthetic proportion which characterized the elder traveller. Earth is no longer the fine work of art it was, for nothing is left to the imagination. Job Hortop, arrived at the height of the Bermudas, thinks it full time to throw us in a merman,—"we discovered a monster in the sea who showed himself three times unto us from the middle upwards, in which parts he was proportioned like a man, of the complexion of a mulatto or tawny Indian." Sir John Hawkins is not satisfied with telling us about the merely sea-

seal Canaries, but is generous enough to throw us in a handful over: "About these islands are certain fitting islands, which have been oftentimes seen, and when men approached near them they vanished, . . . and therefore it should seem he is not yet born to whom God hath appointed the finding of them." Henry Hawkes describes the visible Mexican cities, and then is not so frugal but that he can give us a few invisible ones. "The Spaniards have notice of seven cities which the old men of the Indians show them should be toward the N. W. from Mexico. They have used, and use daily, much diligence in seeking of them, but they cannot find any one of them. They say that the witchcraft of the Indians is such that when they come by these towns they cast a mist upon them so that they cannot see them." Thus do these generous ancient mariners make children of us again. Their successors show us an earth effete and past bearing, tracing out with the eyes of industrious fleas every wrinkle and crowfoot.

The journals of the elder navigators are prose Odysseys. The geographies of our ancestors were works of fancy and imagination. They read poems where we yawn over them. Their world was a huge wonder-horn, exhausted as that which Thor strove to drain. Ours would scarce quench the small thirst of a bee. No modern voyager brings back the magical foundation stones of a Tempest. No Marco Polo, traversing the desert beyond the city of Lok, would tell of things able to inspire the mind of Milton with

"Calling shapes and beckoning shadows dire
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shores and desert wildernesses."

It was easy enough to believe the story of Dante, when two thirds of even the upper-world were yet untraversed and unmapped. With every step of the recent traveller our inheritance of the wonderful is diminished. Those beautifully pictured notes of the Possible are redeemed at a ruinous discount in the hard and cumbersome coin of the actual. How are we not defrauded and impoverished? Does California vie with El Dorado, or are Bruce's Abyssinian Kings a set-off for Prester John? A bird in the bush is worth two in the hand. And if the philosophers have not even yet been able to agree whether the world has any existence independent of ourselves, how do we not gain a loss in every addition to the catalogue of Vulgar Errors? Where are the fishes which nidificated in trees? Where the monopodes sheltering themselves from the sun beneath their single umbrella-like foot, umbrella-like in every thing but the fatal necessity of being borrowed? Where the Acephali, with whom Herodotus, in a kind of ecstasy, wound up his climax of men with abnormal top-pieces? Where the Roc whose eggs are possibly boulders, needing no far-fetched theory of glacier or iceberg to account for them? Where the tails of the Britons? Where the no legs of the bird of Paradise? Where the Unicorn with that single horn of his, sovereign against all manner of poisons? Where the fountain of Youth? Where that Theesalian spring which, without cost to the county, convicted and punished perjurers? Where the Amazons of Orellana? All these, and a thousand other varieties we have lost, and have got nothing instead of them. And those who have robbed us of them have stolen that which not enriches themselves. It is so much wealth cast into the sea beyond all approach of diving bells. We owe no thanks to Mr. J. E. Worcester, whose Geography we studied unforcedly at school. Yet even he had his relatings, and in some softer moment vouchsafed us a fine, inspiring print of the Maelstrom, answerable to the twenty-four mile diameter of its section. Year by year, more and more of the world gets disenchanted. Even the icy privacy of the arctic and antarctic circles is invaded. Our youth are no longer ingenious, as indeed no ingenuity is demanded of them. Every thing is accounted for, every thing cut and dried, and the world may be put together as easily as the fragments of a dissected map. The Mysterious hounds nothing now on the North, South, East, or West. We have played Jack Horner with our earth, till there is never a plum left in it.

Since we cannot have back the old class of voyagers, the next best thing we can do is to send poets out a-travelling. These will at least see all that remains to be seen, and in the way it ought to be seen. These will disentangle nature for us from the various snarls of man, and show us the mighty mother without paint or padding, still fresh and young, full-breasted, strong-backed, fit to suckle and carry her children. The poet is he who bears the charm of freshness in his eyes. He may safely visit Niagara, or those adopted children of nature the Pyramids, sure to find them and to leave them as if no eye had vulgarized them before. For the ordinary tourist all wells have been muddled by the caravans that have passed that way, and his eye, crawling over the monuments of nature and art, adds only its quota of staleness.

Walton quotes an "ingenious Spaniard" as saying, that "rivers and the inhabitants of the watery element were made for wise men to contemplate and fools to pass by without consideration," and Blount, in one of the notes to his translation of Philostratus, asserts that "as travelling does much advantage wise men, so does it no less prejudice fools." Mr. Thoreau is clearly the man we want. He is both wise man and poet. A graduate of Cambridge—the fields and woods, the axe, the hoe, and the rake have since admitted him *ad eundem*. Mark how his imaginative sympathy goes beneath the crust, deeper down than that of Burns, and needs no plough to turn up the object of its muse. "It is pleasant to think in winter, as we walk over the snowy pastures, of those happy dreamers that lie under the sod, of dormice and all that race of dormant creatures which have such a superfluity of life enveloped in thick folds of fur, impervious to the cold."—p. 103. "For

every oak and birch, too, growing on the hilltop, as well as for these elms and willows, we knew that there was a graceful ethereal and ideal tree making down from the roots, and sometimes nature in high tides brings her mirror to its foot and makes it visible."—p. 49. Only some word were better here than *mirror*, (which is true to the fact, but not to the fancy,) since we could not see *through* that. Leigh Hunt represents a colloquy between man and fish, in which both maintain their orthodoxy so rigidly that neither is able to comprehend or tolerate the other. Mr. Thoreau flounders in no such shallows. He is wiser, or his memory is better, and can recreate the sensations of that part of his embryonic life which he passed as a fish. We know nothing more thoroughly charming than his description of twilight at the river's bottom.

"The light gradually forsook the deep water, as well as the deeper air, and the gloaming came to the fishes as well as to us, and more dim and gloomy to them, whose day is perpetual twilight, though sufficiently bright for their weak and watery eyes. Vespers had already rung in many a dim and watery chapel down below, where the shadows of the weeds were extended in length over the sandy floor. The vespertine pout had already begun to flit on leathern fin, and the finny gossip withdrew from the fluvial streets to creeks and coves, and other private haunts, excepting a few of stronger fin, which anchored in the stream, stemming the tide even in their dreams. Meanwhile, like a dark evening cloud, we were wafted over the cope of their sky, deepening the shadows on their deluged fields."

One would say this was the work of some bream Homer. Melville's pictures of life in Typee have no attraction beside it. Truly we could don scales, pectorals, dorsals, and anals, (critics are already cold-blooded,) to stroll with our dumb love, fin in fin, through the Rialto of this subfluvial Venice. The Complete Angler, indeed! Walton had but an extra-queous and coquise intimacy with the fishes compared with this. His tench and dace are but the poor transported convicts of the frying-pan.

There was a time when Musketquad and Merrimack flowed down from the Unknown. The adventurer wist not what fair reaches stretched before him, or what new dusky peoples the next bend would discover. Surveyor and map have done what they could to rob them of their charm of unexpectedness. The urns of the old river-gods have been twitched from under their arms and set up on the museum-shelf, or worse yet, they serve to boil the manufacturer's plum-porridge. But Mr. Thoreau with the touch of his oar conjures back as much as may be of the old enchantment. His map extends to the bed of the river, and he makes excursions into inland, penetrating among the scaly tribes without an angle. He is the true cosmopolitan or citizen of the Beautiful. He is thoroughly impartial—*Tros*, *Tyrionne*—a lichen or a man, it is all one, he looks on both with equal eyes. We are at a loss where to class him. He might be Mr. Bird, Mr. Fish, Mr. Rivers, Mr. Brook, Mr. Wood, Mr. Stone, or Mr. Flower, as well as Mr. Thoreau. His work has this additional argument for freshness, the birds, beasts, fishes, trees, and plants having this advantage, that none has hitherto gone among them in the missionary line. They are trapped for their furs, shot and speared for their flesh, hewn for their timber, and grubbed for Indian Vegetable Pills, but they remain yet happily unconverted in primitive heathendom. They take neither rum nor gunpowder in the natural way, and pay tithes without being Judaized. Mr. Thoreau goes among them neither as hunter nor propagandist. He makes a few advances to them in the way of Buddhism, but gives no list of catechumens, though flowers would seem to be the natural followers of that prophet.

In truth, Mr. Thoreau himself might absorb the forces of the entire alphabetic sanctity of the A. B. C. F. M., persisting as he does in a fine, intelligent paganism. We need no more go to the underworld to converse with shadows of old philosophers. Here we have the Academy brought to our doors, and our modern world criticized from beneath the shelter of the Portico. Were we writing commendatory verses after the old style, to be prefixed to this volume, we should begin somewhat thus:—

If the ancient, mystique, anisfabian
Was (so he claimed) of them that Troy town was
Before he was born, even so his soul we see
(Time's ocean underpass) revive in thee,
As, diving nigh to Elia, Arethuse
Comes up to loose her nose by Syracuse

The great charm of Mr. Thoreau's book seems to be, that its being a book at all is a happy fortuity. The door of the portfolio-cage has been left open, and the thoughts have flown out of themselves. The paper and types are only accidents. The page is confidential like a diary. Pepsy is not more minute, more pleasantly unconscious. It is like a book dug up, that has no date to assign it a special contemporaneity, and no name of author. It has been written with no uncomfortable sense of a public looking over the shoulder. And the author is the least ingredient in it, too. All which I saw and part of which I was, would be an apt motto for the better portions of the volume: a part, moreover, just as the river, the trees, and the fishes are. Generally he holds a very smooth mirror up to nature, and if, now and then, he shows us his own features in the glass, when we had rather look at something else, it is as a piece of nature, and we must forgive him if he allow it a too usurping position in the landscape. He looks at the country sometimes (as painters advise) through the triumphal arch of his own legs, and, though the upsidownness of the prospect has its own charm of unaccustomedness, the arch itself is not the most graceful.

So far of the manner of the book, now of the book itself. It professes to be the journal of a week on Concord and Merrimack Rivers. We must have our libraries enlarged, if Mr.

Thoreau intend to complete his autobiography on this scale—four hundred and thirteen pages to a sennight! He begins honestly enough as the Boswell of Musketaquid and Merrimack. It was a fine subject and a new one. We are curious to know somewhat of the private and interior life of two such prominent and oldest inhabitants. Musketaquid saw the tremulous match half-doubtfully touched to the revolutionary train. The blood of Captain Lincoln and his drummer must have dribbled through the loose planks of the bridge for Musketaquid to carry down to Merrimack, that he in turn might mingle it with the sea. Merrimack is a drudge now, grinding for the Philistines, who takes repeated dammings without resentment, and walks in no procession for higher wages. But its waters remember the Redman, and before the Redman. They knew the first mammoth as a calf, and him a mere *parvenu* and modern. Even to the saurians they could say—we remember your grandfather.

Much information and entertainment were to be pumped out of individuals like these, and the pump does not suck in Mr. Thoreau's hands. As long as he continues an honest Boswell, his book is delightful, but sometimes he serves his two rivers as Hadlitt did Northcote, and makes them run Thoreau or Emerson, or, indeed, anything but their own transparent element. What, for instance, have Concord and Merrimack to do with Boodh, themselves professors of an elder and to them wholly sufficient religion, namely, the willing subjects of watery laws, to seek their ocean? We have digressions on Boodh, on Anacreon, (with translations hardly so good as Cowley,) on Persius, on Friendship, and we know not what. We come upon them like snags, jolting us headforemost out of our places as we are rowing placidly up stream or drifting down. Mr. Thoreau becomes so absorbed in these discussions, that he seems, as it were, to catch a crab, and disappears uncomfortably from his seat at the how-oar. We could forgive them all, especially that on Books, and that on Friendship, (which is worthy of one who has so long communed with Nature and with Emerson,) we could welcome them all, were they put by themselves at the end of the book. But as it is, they are out of proportion and out of place, and mar our Merrimacking dreadfully. We were bid to a river-party, not to be preached at. They thrust themselves obtrusively out of the narrative, like those quarries of red glass which the Bowery dandies (envious of Sisyphus) push laboriously before them as breast-pins.

Before we get through the book, we begin to feel as if the author had used the term week, as the Jews did the number forty, for an indefinite measure of time. It is quite evident that we have something more than a transcript of his flivatile experiences. The leaves of his portfolio and river-journal seem to have been shuffled together with a trustful dependence on some overruling printer-providence. We trace the lines of successive deposits as plainly as on the sides of a deep cut, or rather on those of a trench carried through made-land in the city, where choiceness of material has been of less import than suitability to fill up, and where plaster and broken bricks from old buildings, oyster-shells, and dock mud have been shot pell-mell together. Yet we must allow that Mr. Thoreau's materials are precious, too. His plaster has bits of ancient symbols painted on it, his bricks are stamped with mystic sentences, his shells are of pearl-oysters, and his mud from the Sacramento.

"Give me a sentence," prays Mr. Thoreau bravely, "which no intelligence can understand!"—and we think that the kind gods have nodded. There are some of his utterances which have foiled us, and we belong to that class of beings which he thus reproachfully stigmatises as intelligences. We think it must be this taste that makes him so fond of the Hindoo philosophy, which would seem admirably suited to men, if men were only oysters. Or is it merely because, as he naively confesses in another place, "his soul is of a bright invisible green"? We would recommend to Mr. Thoreau some of the Welsh sacred poetry. Many of the Triads hold an indinite deal of nothing, especially after the bottoms have been knocked out of them by translation. But it seems ungrateful to find fault with a book which has given us so much pleasure. We have eaten salt (Attic, too,) with Mr. Thoreau. It is the hospitality and not the fare which carries a benediction with it, and it is a sort of ill breeding to report any oddity in the viands. His feast is here and there a little savage, (indeed, he professes himself a kind of volunteer Redman,) and we must make out with the fruits, merely giving a sidelong glance at the haked dog and pickled missionary, and leaving them in grateful silence.

We wish the General Court had been wise enough to have appointed our author to make the report on the Ichthyology of Massachusetts. Then, indeed, would the people of the state have known something of their aquicolal fellow-citizens.

Mr. Thoreau handles them as if he loved them, as old Isaac recommends us to do with a worm in impaling it. He is the very Asmodeus of their private life. He unroofs their dwellings and makes us familiar with their loves and sorrows. He seems to suffer a sea-change, like the Scotch peasant who was carried down among the seals in the capacity of family physician. He balances himself with them under the domestic Ely-ped, takes a family-bite with them, is made the confidant of their courtships, and is an honored guest at the wedding-feast. He has doubtless seen a pickerel crossed in love, a perch Othello, a bream the victim of an unappreciated idiosyncrasy, or a minnow with a mission. He goes far to convince us of what we have before suspected, that fishes are the highest of organizations. The natives of that more solid atmosphere, they are not subject to wind or rain, they have been guilty of no Promethean rape, they have bitten no apple.

They build no fences, holding their watery inheritance undivided. Beyond all other living things they mind their own business. They have not degenerated to the necessity of reform, swallowing no social pills, but living quietly on each other in a true primitive community. They are vexed with no theories of the currency which go deeper than the Newfoundland Banks. *Nimium fortunati!* We wish Mr. Thoreau would undertake a report upon them as a private enterprise. It would be the most delightful book of natural history extant.

Mr. Thoreau's volume is the more pleasant that with all its fresh smell of the woods, it is yet the work of a bookish man. We not only hear the laugh of the flicker, and the watchman's rattle of the red squirrel, but the voices of poets and philosophers, old and new. There is no more reason why an author should reflect trees and mountains than books, which, if they are in any sense real, are as good parts of nature as any other kind of growth. We confess that there is a certain charm for us even about a fool who has read myriads of books. There is an undefinable atmosphere around him, as of distant lands around a great traveller, and of distant years around very old men. But we think that Mr. Thoreau sometimes makes a bad use of his books. Better things can be got out of Herbert and Vaughan and Donne than the art of making bad verses. There is no harm in good writing, nor do wisdom and philosophy prefer crambo. Mr. Thoreau never learned bad rhyming of the river and the sky. He is the more culpable as he has shown that he can write poetry at once melodious and distinct, with rare delicacy of thought and feeling.

"My life is like a stroll upon the beach,
As near the ocean's edge as I can go,
My tardy steps its waves sometimes o'erreach,
Sometimes I stay to let them overflow."

"My sole employment 'tis, and scrupulous care,
To place my gains beyond the reach of tides,
Each smoother pebble, and each shell more rare,
Which ocean kindly to my hand conveys."

"I have but few companions on the shore,
They scorn the strand who sail upon the sea,
Yet oft I think the ocean they've sailed o'er
Is deeper known upon the strand to me."

"The middle sea contains no crimson dulse,
Its deeper waves cast up no pearls to view,
Along the shore my hand is on its pulse,
And I converse with many a shipwrecked crew."

If Mr. Emerson choose to leave some hard nuts for posterity to crack, he can perhaps afford it as well as any. We counsel Mr. Thoreau, in his own words, to take his hat and come out of that. If he prefer to put peas in his shoes when he makes private poetical excursions, it is nobody's affair. But if the public are to go along with him, they will find some way to boil theirs.

We think that Mr. Thoreau, like most solitary men, exaggerates the importance of his own thoughts. The "I" occasionally stretches up tall as Pompey's pillar over a somewhat flat and sandy expanse. But this has its counterbalancing advantage, that it leads him to secure many a fancy and feeling which would flit by most men unnoticed. The little confidences of nature which pass his neighbours as the news slip through the grasp of birds perched upon the telegraphic wires, he received as they were personal messages from a mistress. Yet the book is not solely excellent as a Talbotype of natural scenery. It abounds in fine thoughts, and there is many a critical *obiter dictum* which is good law, as what he says of Raleigh's style.

"Sir Walter Raleigh might well be studied if only for the excellence of his style, for he is remarkable in the midst of so many masters. There is a natural emphasis in his style, like a man's tread, and a breathing space between the sentences, which the best of modern writing does not furnish. His chapters are like English parks, or say rather like a western forest, where the larger growth keeps down the underwood, and one may ride on horseback through the openings."

Since we have found fault with some of what we may be allowed to call the worsification, we should say that the prose work is done conscientiously and neatly. The style is compact and the language has an antique purity like wine grown colorless with age. There are passages of a genial humor interspersed at fit intervals, and we close our article with one of them by way of grace. It is a sketch which would have delighted Lamh.

"I can just remember an old brown-coated man who was the Walton of this stream, who had come over from Newcastle, England, with his son, the latter a stout and hearty man who had lifted an anchor in his day. A straight old man he was who took his way in silence through the meadows, having passed the period of communication with his fellows; his old experienced coat hanging long and straight and brown as the yellow pine bark, glittering with so much smothered sunlight, if you stood near enough, no work of art but naturalized at length. I often discovered him unexpectedly amid the pads and the gray willows when he moved, fishing in some old country method,—for youth and age then went a fishing together,—full of incommunicable thoughts, perchance about his own Tyne and Northumberland. He was always to be seen in serene afternoons haunting the river, and almost rustling with the sedge; so many sunny hours in an old man's life, entrapping silly fish, almost grown to be the man's familiar; what need had he of hat or raiment any, having served out his time, and seen through such thin disguises? I have seen how his coeval fates rewarded him with the yellow perch, and yet I thought his luck was not in proportion to his years; and I have seen when, with slow steps and weighed down with aged thoughts, he disappeared with his fish under his low-roofed house on the skirts of the village. I think nobody else saw him; nobody else remembers him now, for he soon after died, and migrated to new Tyne streams. His fishing was not a sport, nor solely a means of subsistence, but a sort of solemn sacrament and withdrawal from the world, just as the aged read their bible."

and a relaxed philosophy of living, who permitted him through the reconstruction of the Homeric life to live in part his ideal life." (p.85) Unquestionably Thoreau delighted in Homer, but to call Walden "the Homeric experiment" is, to say the least, an overstatement.

She continues in this vein, finding the influence of the ancient Greeks particularly great on Thoreau. "In the depression of the post-Walden years, Thoreau found sanative value in the husbandry writers and a gleam of hope in that vision of the Grecian Era evoked by the telegraph harp. When he knew at last that he would not in this world attain the world of which he had dreamed, the Golden Age of the Greeks became an acceptable substitute." (p.85). That to my mind is putting it rather strongly.

And now for minor details: She implies an inconsistency (p.2) in Thoreau's life because he spent the last few months of his life in writing instead of roaming the woods--ignoring the fact that Thoreau was bedridden those months. In order to produce a pattern in Thoreau's writing, she tends to be arbitrary in dating Thoreau's MSS. Thus she places "Life Without Principle" in the last few months of his life despite the fact he delivered it as a lecture as early as Dec. 26, 1854. She declares *Antigone* to be a source for "Civil Disobedience, yet clearly dates his reading of *Antigone* after the publication of the essay. She dates his discovery that "Concord was his heaven" at approximately 1854 (p. 75). Yet in 1843 he had used almost those exact words in a letter. But these are minor details. They are more than outweighed by the insight given into the influence of his intellectual background upon his thought. It provides another stepping stone towards the development of a thorough study of the growth of his mind. Although a by-product of her study, one of her most important contributions is the correlation and comparison of similar passages in his journals to show the development of his style. The student of Thoreau's mind will not be able to do without this book, but I fear the general reader will find it tough going. . . WH

NOTES AND QUERIES . . .

In the January Bulletin we quoted a few lines of Thoreau and asked their source. We were both delighted and overwhelmed with the replies. It was taken from the chapter "What I Lived For" in *WALDEN* and was correctly identified by our following members: D. Boyington, R. Crowell, T. Davis, W. Gierasch, J. Griscom, G. Hill, A. Kamp, F. Piper, and G. Wright.

In the January bulletin we also called attention to Channing's copy of *WALDEN* in New York Public Library's Berg Collection. Edwin Teale notes that Channing has cut out the Ticknor & Fields imprint, evidently because of a quarrel with that company. Can anyone tell us the story behind it?

Mrs. Lee Litchfield has sent us some Christmas cards which she purchased in Canada last year. They are beautiful winter scenes, but each contains a long and absolutely unacknowledged quotation from *WALDEN*.

Our only member in Netherlands, C. W. Bieling has located some copies of the Dutch edition of *WALDEN*. (For its interesting story see Bulletin 14). He would like to exchange them for certain American books. If you are interested in swapping, write your secretary.

W. M. Cummings (2276 Youngman Avenue, St. Paul 5, Minn.) has sent us a copy of *MINNESOTA HISTORY* for January, 1935, with its excellent article on "Thoreau in Minnesota" by John T. Flanagan. He adds, "I will be glad to send copies to any member requesting same. . . I would like to help out in my small way to increase fellow members' Thoreau collections."

ADDITIONS TO THE THOREAU BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . WRH

Berry, Romeyn. "State and Tioga." *ITHACA (N.Y.) JOURNAL*. Aug. 1, 1949. An essay on T's writing style.

Cheney, David M. "Clinton Man Retraces Thoreau's Trail in Wild Maine Woods." *WORCESTER (MASS.) TELEGRAM*. Jan. 7, 1951. p.7. An essay on the Maine Woods today.

James, E.H. "Thoreau and The State." *THE WORD (Glasgow, Scotland)*. *XLII* (March, 1951), 56.

On T's political views.

Landis, Benson Y. "Where History is Everything, or, Concord Revisited." *TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH, LXIX* (March, 1951), 9-10. Thoughts on T. while on a pilgrimage to Concord.

Lathrop, George Parsons. "On Thoreau." *BROOKLYN STANDARD UNION*. Dec. 19, 1894. Detailed report of a lecture on T.

Lockley, R.M. *DREAM ISLAND DAYS* (London, 1943), *LETTERS FROM SKOKHOLM* (London, 1847), and *WAY TO AN ISLAND*. All quote T. frequently and acknowledge indebtedness to him.

MacDonald, George. *LILITH: A ROMANCE*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1895. This once-popular novel opens with a two-page quotation from T's "Walking."

Merritt, Diana Lejeune. "Writer of Journals." *MANCHESTER (Eng.) GUARDIAN WEEKLY*. Jan. 11, 1951. p. 10. A brief essay on T. at Walden.

Nevinson, H.W. *LAST CHANGES LAST CHANCES*. London: Nisbet, 1928. pp. 226-7, an extended tribute to T. and quotation from *WALDEN*.

Seybold, Ethel. *THOREAU: THE QUEST AND THE CLASSICS*. New Haven: Yale, 1951. \$3.00.

Thide, Olivia. "Thoreau's Occupations." *BROOKLYN EAGLE*. March 7, 1897. Essay reprinted from *BACHELOR OF ARTS*.

Thoreau, Henry David. *CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, ON THE DUTY OF*. Yiddish translation by Jos. J. Cohen. Los Angeles: Rocker Publications Committee, 1950. 66pp. The only in-print translation of Thoreau into Yiddish.

_____. *JOURNALS*. Review. *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*. April 8, 1951.

_____. *MAINE WOODS* (Lunt edition). Review.

_____. *YANKEE, XIV* (June, 1950), 77.

_____. "The Meaning of Life." *THINK*. March, 1951.

_____. A series of quotations.

_____. "Reading" & "Where I lived." *THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE IN PROSE*. New York: Oxford, 1951.

_____. *WALDEN*. Annotated and translated into Japanese by Toru Okamoto. "Helix Library." Tokyo. Fukuoka: Chikushi Shobo, 1948. 131pp. Pages 1-67 contain "Where I Lived," "Sounds," "Visitors," and "The Ponds." Pages 68-161 are in Japanese, as is the introduction, pp. 1-viii.

Tyler, Alice F. *FREEDOM'S FERMENT*. Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn., 1944. An intellectual history of the United States. Thoreau, pp. 56-9.

Wilson, Carroll A. *THIRTEEN AUTHOR COLLECTIONS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND FIVE CENTURIES OF FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS*. Edited by Jean Wilson and David Randall. New York: Scribners, 1950. 2 vol. \$50.00. Contains a detailed account of 13 first editions, a MS letter, a Thoreau pencil, and the 1837 Harvard graduation program all in Mr. Wilson's collection.

Young, Vernon. "Mary Austin and the Earth Performance." *SOUTHWEST REVIEW, XXXV* (Summer, 1950), 153-63. Thoreau compared unfavorably with Mary Austin as a writer.

We are indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: R. Adams, F. Babcock, T. Bailey, H. Bierce, W. Conant, J. Cooley, T. Davis, E. Gannett, C. Hoagland, N. Lehrman, P. Litchfield, A. Lowne, F. Moore, D. Munro, E. Oliver, F. Piper, R. Robbins, A. Shedd, J. Webb, H. West, R. Wheeler, D. Williams, and G. Wright. Pleased keep the secretary informed of new Thoreauviana and items he has missed.

The Thoreau Society Inc. is an informal organization of several hundred students and followers of the life and works of Henry David Thoreau. Membership is open to anyone interested. Fees are one dollar a year; life membership, twenty-five dollars. A price list of back publications may be obtained from the secretary. This bulletin is issued quarterly by the secretary. All material, unless otherwise assigned, is compiled or written by the secretary.

The officers of the society are Raymond Adams, Chapel Hill, N.C., president; Mrs. Caleb Wheeler, Concord, Mass., vice-president; and secretary-treasurer:

Walter Harding
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.